

[Letter from John A. Lomax to Harold Spivacke]

Brownsville, Texas April 25, 1939

Mr. Harold Spivacke Chief of Music Division Library of Congress Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Spivacke:

We got from the Presto Recording Corporation three sapphire cutting needles. They are giving us an improved quality of records. An accident happened to one, which I re-enclose to you. I suggest that you send it back to Presto for repointing, and at the same time ask them to send me two additional needles. I need to have that many, I think, in reserve. You can address me, until further notice, University Station, Austin, Texas.

Recently, we are making good progress in getting records—Spanish, English, and negro. Sunday we had four engagements, forty or fifty miles apart, and filled them all in about sixteen hours of work. Here in Brownsville, I think I could stay profitably for the Music Division throughout a month, and turn up something worth while every day. Before I leave this section, I will have, I think, fair samples of the stuff that can be got here, including cowboy songs—a type that you have asked me more than once to get on the library records.

We have been slow getting out of Texas because I was held up much longer in Houston, Texas, on a private enterprise which had nothing to do with my library work. Going out of Texas, we will first strike Arkansas, then Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and South Carolina. I shall keep you informed, now and then, as to our progress.

I do not believe that I have reported to you that the batteries finally reached us safely. Upon attempting to use them, I found them stone dry, and without any juice whatever. I

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have since had them filled, 2 tried them out, and they are working again. I believe this is an account of all my troubles.

Meanwhile, when you write, if you have any lively news about Alan, please pass it on. He seems so submerged in a cataclysm of activities that I seldom hear from him.

Kindest regards, in which Miss Terrill joins me, especially to Mrs. Spivacke.

Sincerely yours John A. Lomax By Pauline Dozier